

# 1962 Mids on Watch

## *Navy Issues New Rules on Sleep and Watch*

*[from John Kelly, Sept 2017]* Blackie,

I've never heard of "five and dime." It was 4 on, 8 off for us except in some cases when we had a four-section watch when we had 12 off. I remember on USS Gainard we were in a 3-section watch on the bridge and CIC. One of the RD1s from CIC was competent to stand CIC watch officer and the watch standers wanted him added to the watch bill so it could become a four-section watch but the senior watch officer, whose name I can almost remember, nixed it. He showed up at Monterey not long after I arrived there.

I met a submarine officer NROTC who said their watches were 8-on, 16 off. That surprised me so I asked one of our classmates and he, a submarine pork chop, confirmed it.

The Navy should look at the merchant marine and the coast guard. On merchant ships we have entire crews about the size of the number of people on watch in a Navy ship and we don't go around colliding. At most, in the merchant marine we have three watchstanders on the bridge, at night. IN daytime there are only two. At night the engine room in lots of our ships are unattended. The speed is controlled from the bridge. An engine watch officer has to make rounds every two hours or so and is available to respond to alarms. And we sail ships as big and bigger than the US Navy. Typical cargo ship crews are 21 in the USA and lower on foreign ships.

One of the most obvious problems is that the US Navy apparently has ordered the ships to not activate their automatic identification systems [AIS], even in crowded seaways. The AIS is equivalent to an aircraft IFF. When Russian airplanes operate without IFF we criticize them. Spence Johnson told me last Saturday at the football tailgate that the Navy has changed their mind about the AIS.

John



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6:15 AM (3 hours  
ago)

to mike

I just remembered the senior watch officer's name: Trost.

He was the mal de mer prone much disliked Lieutenant, I think he was the ops officer but am not certain.

John -

That's my recollection also, 4 on and 8 off.

You talked about bridge and CIC watch - what about the engine room? I recall for sure I learned to drink coffee in the engine room - would that have been youngster cruise? Still 4 on and 8 off, but ... were we always in engine room?

For youngster cruise, I was on USS Northampton, as was Ron Saqui. Did you say you were on there also?

Blackie,

I was also on USS Northampton youngster cruise and spent lots of time in the engine room when not chipping paint with the 1st Division. First I stood watch on that glass tube that showed the boiler water level, beside Ron Klemick. Then I got transferred to the oil kings. There my duty was to keep the coffee pot full and fresh. I also spent a fair amount of time on the signal bridge, in particular while we were entering the St. Lawrence seaway. I did everything there, flashing light, flag hoists, all except semaphore, which I never learned. I remember one of the junior officers semaphoring from one end of the ship to the other.

I don't remember any watches we stood in the Gainard engine room, only bridge and CIC. I went to the engine room to get my practical factors signed off and the ensign who was the MPA tried to teach me how to operate a steam driven pump but I was too inept. He was a Kings Pt. graduate and very good. Lt(jg) Berkelite was the engineer officer, but he stood watch on the bridge (and didn't like my shiphandling very much. I don't know if there was an officer on watch in the engine room, maybe, maybe not because that MPA ensign didn't stand watches on the bridge I don't think. I sort of hung around the radio room while not on watch. It sort of annoyed the RMs until once I helped them out copying one of the CW tactical nets they were supposed to be following. They had teletype and received a fleet broadcast circuit named Kilo Romeo Jason, as I remember. Jason was the encryption system I think. I didn't understand teletype then, nor crypto.

John